



File available for download on our website

# LISAvienna Highlights

Fall & Winter 2023

**EIT Health Austria: Hands-on support for regional start-up companies**  
page 6

**Proxygen: Reshaping the boundaries of drug discovery in Vienna**  
page 8

## First Austrian Life Science Day in Vienna exceeds all expectations

LISAvienna was invited to organize the first ever Austrian Life Science Day and we were overwhelmed by the enormous interest and the intense discussions on the future of precision medicine and life science support programs available at the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) and at Austria Wirtschaftsservice (aws), the promotional bank of the Austrian federal government.

Thanks to all of you for supporting the event:  
ABA – Austrian Business Agency | AGES/BASG  
| Austrian Platform for Personalized Medicine  
ÖPPM | AUSTROMED | Biotech Austria | DEBRA  
Austria | EIT Health Austria | FH Technikum Wien  
/ Academy | invIOs | LISA – Life Science Austria |  
Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft | MedUni Innsbruck |  
MedUni Vienna | Myllia Biotechnology | NeuroLentech  
| Pharmig / Academy | Roche Austria | Sarcura,  
and our cluster partners across Austria.

Slide decks and a photo gallery are available at  
[www.LISAvienna.at](http://www.LISAvienna.at)





© LISAvienna / Beranek

## Dear readers!

It is our great pleasure to welcome a new team member to LISAvienna. Together with Elvira Kainersdorfer, Eva Schlintl now boosts our activities for the development and international positioning of Vienna as an attractive and flourishing life sciences location. In this issue of our newsletter, we look back on selected success stories again and highlight several news items. An example is the first Austrian Life Science Day, which we organized on behalf of LISA - Life Science Austria. This day was all about personalized medicine and the active support of the life sciences industry by aws and FFG. We are also very excited about the establishment of a branch in Vienna of the non-profit EIT Health. It is progressing rapidly, and we introduce you to the contact person for start-ups. So our network continues to grow, both in terms of start-ups and existing companies, as well as in terms of players who join us in helping to leverage the economic and societal potential of life sciences. Brand new in our contact pool is the Future Health Lab, whose founding partners are the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, the Austrian Public Health Insurance Fund, and the Vienna Business Agency. The goal is to develop and test digital solutions for challenges in the healthcare system and bring them into use.

We hope you enjoy reading the latest news.

Johannes Sarx and Philipp Hainzl  
LISAvienna Executive Board

**+++ Trade shows and conferences +++**

### **BIO-Europe Munich**

November 6-8, 2023

### **Medica Düsseldorf**

November 13-16, 2023

### **BIO-Europe Spring Barcelona**

March 18-20, 2024

### **The MedTech Forum Vienna**

May 22-24, 2024

A MEMBER OF

**LISA** LIFE SCIENCE AUSTRIA



© LISAvienna / Beranek

Eva Schlintl joined LISAvienna in September 2023 as a technology expert contributing to the ongoing development of the Vienna Life Science Cluster. She advises biotechnology, medtech and pharmaceutical companies on all aspects

of establishment, settlement, funding, cooperation, infrastructure and internationalization. She also promotes networking in the sector at international trade events, and in the context of cooperation with associations.

### **Contact**

#### **ARGE LISAvienna**

Life Science Austria Vienna  
Walcherstrasse 11A  
1020 Vienna, Austria

**PHONE:** + 43 (0) 1 50175 358

**E-MAIL:** [office@LISAvienna.at](mailto:office@LISAvienna.at)

**WEB:** [www.LISAvienna.at](http://www.LISAvienna.at)



[@lisavienna](https://www.linkedin.com/company/lisavienna)

# LISAvienna: Prime partner for open innovation initiatives at global players

**Collaboration and the exchange of knowledge are key ingredients for developing successful products and services in the life sciences. This is why LISAvienna appreciates creating opportunities for start-ups to exchange ideas with global players. Boehringer Ingelheim, Roche and Takeda in Vienna were center stage this year.**

Almost 100 innovators from across Austria applied for informal meeting slots this year. Vienna-based companies such as **Holloid** (in-line process monitoring using machine learning and digital holographic microscopy), **nyra health** (AI-based platform for diagnosing and treating neurological disorders) and **Somareality** (digital biomarkers based on eye-tracking) were selected to participate.

## **Boehringer Ingelheim Office Hours**

Boehringer Ingelheim has been providing opportunities for one-on-one roundtable discussions at the Vienna BioCenter for several years and has received strong praise from participants. At Boehringer Ingelheim RCV, Maria Antonietta Impagnatiello, Business Development & Licensing, and Guido Boehmelt, Research Beyond Borders, oversee the “Office Hours” which are part of Boehringer Ingelheim’s Grass Roots initiative. They comment: “We highly appreciate collaborating with LISAvienna on this pioneering mentoring event. Together with our colleagues from around the globe we lift the lid on how a big pharma company works and provide access to expertise, an industry perspective and feedback to emerging life-science businesses.”

## **Roche Open Innovation Day**

Roche in Austria is interested in strengthening its ties to early-stage innovators at the heart of Europe. This year, Roche organized an Open Innovation Day with LISAvienna that had a strong focus on digital health products and services that enable patients and healthcare providers to improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment, monitoring and management of health. The main fields of interest were solutions focusing on oncology, neurology, infectiology, immunology,

rare diseases, ophthalmology, cardiology and metabolism. Philipp Wittmann, Healthcare System Partner at Roche Austria, was in charge of the event: “Austria’s innovation landscape truly holds big promises for fruitful collaborations. At Roche, we are excited about the great interest from start-ups in the opportunity to get in touch with us. We are convinced that patients will benefit from some great collaborations and innovations in the future!”

## **Takeda R&D Science Day**

Takeda hosted its first R&D Science Day in Vienna in 2023. In collaboration with LISAvienna the event was aimed at start-ups and academics interested in sharing their knowledge on sustainable process development technology innovations. Six teams got feedback on their technology solutions from Takeda’s big player perspective. Larissa Kahr, Head of External Partnership Interface Europe at Takeda in Austria, spearheaded the first R&D Science Day and comments: “This was a great inaugural event with an exciting mix of participants from the tech and life-sciences start-up scene as well as academia. Our focus this time on sustainable bioprocess solutions within R&D was met by excellent presentations and lively discussions.”

We invite you to subscribe to our newsletter and to follow us on LinkedIn to stay up to date on future events boosting open innovation.



# Bulletin Board

Save the date!

**Valneva** celebrates 10 years of advancing vaccines for better lives



© Valneva / Gabriel Alarcón



ViennaUP  
3.-9.6.2024

© Vienna Business Agency / Karin Hackl



[www.lifesciencesdirectory.at](http://www.lifesciencesdirectory.at)

## European Research Council (ERC) Grants for scientists in Vienna's outstanding life sciences sector:

**CeMM:** ERC Starting Grant for Clarissa Campbell and Barbara Maier

**IMP:** ERC Starting Grant for Moritz Gaidt, Diana Pinheiro and Joris van der Veeke

**University of Vienna:** ERC Starting Grant for Agnes Dellinger, Charlotte Grosse Wiesmann and Irma Querques | ERC Proof of Concept Grant for Christa Schleper

**FFG infrastructure funding boosts life sciences research in Vienna:**  
**MedUni Vienna:** High throughput platform for spatially resolved profiling of single cells  
**University of Vienna, CeMESS:** Advanced microbiome imaging equipment  
**Vienna BioCenter Core Facilities:** Austrian single-cell proteomics platform

**RIANA Therapeutics** enters into collaboration agreement with the Lead Discovery Center (LDC) to discover and develop novel cancer therapeutics that disrupt oncogenic protein-protein interactions (PPIs).

**Octapharma** to invest €200 million in scaling up its manufacturing capacities of high-quality human proteins as medicines for patients in hematology, immunotherapy and critical care



© Octapharma / Martin Steiger

**Arkeon** will be among the first tenants to move into the Vienna Business Agency's new tz3 building that is under construction at Vienna's Seestadt innovation hub. This is a big milestone for Arkeon, a company which transforms CO<sub>2</sub> into functional protein ingredients.



© David Bohmann

**MedUni Vienna:** “Corona Monument of Hope” artwork unveiled on the forecourt of the University Hospital Vienna



© MedUni Vienna / APA photo service / Hörmandinger

**Takeda's** dengue vaccine is tested by the company's global pathogen safety team in Vienna. The lab at the manufacturing site in Vienna was expanded with a new building.



© Lisi Specht

## LISAvienna congratulates on securing funding

**aws Seedfinancing** Deep Tech (2022): CellElectric, Brightmind.AI, fermify and Ascense Medical

**Contextflow** was approved for EIC Accelerator equity investment – as the only Austrian company selected in the latest round of funding.

**fermify** raises \$5 million seed financing for continuous precision fermentation to produce animal-free cheese.

**nyra health** (previously known as myReha) raises €4.5 million in seed financing to further advance its digital neuro-therapy.

**piur imaging** accumulated a Series A investment amount of nearly €5 million for tomographic ultrasound.

**Vivaldi Biosciences** is part of an international consortium developing a universal influenza vaccine and received a € 7.6 million grant from the European Union.



© Boehringer Ingelheim / Rainer Mirau

**Roofing ceremony** at the Boehringer Ingelheim Regional Center Vienna: Everything goes according to plan at the new cancer research building.

## HOOKIPA Pharma Update

- Positive preliminary Phase 2 data on HB-200 in combination with pembrolizumab in 1st-line setting for advanced head and neck cancer
- Recruitment ongoing for two Phase 1 clinical trials
- IND-enabling activities in progress to advance two additional therapeutics into the clinic in 2024
- \$50 million follow-on offering strengthened cash basis



**Future Health Lab:** This innovation center for the future of the Austrian healthcare system opened its doors in September 2023. LISAvienna is on board as a network partner and is committed to facilitating optimizing and implementing life sciences innovations made in Vienna.



© Future Health Lab / Jennifer Feitz

# EIT Health Austria: Hands-on support for regional start-up companies

Since last year, the Vienna-based EIT Health Austria facilitates accessing the wide range of support services available through its European institute. A newly established local team is now available to support regional innovators in bringing cutting-edge technologies to European citizens.

Start-ups are invited to consult their local team for information on the available programs and to get help in grant writing as well as feedback on individual proposals. In addition, the new hub leads the HealthGateway.Austria project funded by the FFG: Life science start-ups can, for example, join various networking events or may book a meeting room for appointments with potential partners at EIT Health Austria's premises near Rochusmarkt - at no cost.

## Opportunities for start-ups include:

**Catapult:** European pitch competition with award ceremony at the Bits & Pretzels HealthTech conference

**Venture Centre of Excellence:** Access to strategic connections and funds such as EIF

**Bridgehead:** Support from top incubators and accelerators to take your healthcare business abroad

**ULabs:** User validation labs to test your digital health innovation with patients and healthcare providers

**Wild card:** Mentoring and investment pitches, with new health challenges each year

**Gold track:** Expert mentoring for massively scalable healthcare companies, workshops held across Europe

## Recent success stories from Vienna

**Biome Diagnostics:** Medical microbiome diagnostics solution receives multiple awards for excellence issued by EIT Health, and advertising space at NASDAQ Tower in Times Square, New York.

**Health Force:** AI assistant that takes care of everyday, time-consuming tasks to save hospital staff time is accepted for the EIT Health Bridgehead program.

**G.ST Antivirals:** Host cell-based strategy to develop broad-spectrum antivirals against infections of the respiratory tract selected for Catapult 2023-24 semi-finals.

## About EIT Health

EIT Health's ambition is to enable people in Europe to live longer, healthier lives. To achieve this goal, it links 130 partner organizations from education, research, business and healthcare. Start-ups and SMEs play a key role in their community of over 3,500 professionals from across the continent.

EIT Health is one of nine so-called "Knowledge and Innovation Communities" (KICs) supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), an independent institution of the European Union. Each is dedicated to finding solutions to a specific global challenge and focuses on the development of innovative products and services, new companies, and training the next generation of entrepreneurs.

## Reach out for support



**Melanie Hartl, MA**  
Entrepreneurship Lead  
[melanie.hartl@eithealth.eu](mailto:melanie.hartl@eithealth.eu)  
[www.eithealth.eu/in-your-region/austria/](http://www.eithealth.eu/in-your-region/austria/)



## Why Vienna?

“We are excited to work with the Austrian government to establish the IVI country office in Vienna. The IVI Austria Country Office will support our capacity to interact

with the Austrian stakeholders, including start-ups, pharmaceutical and biotech companies, universities, research institutes, and global health advocates to advance vaccine R&D for neglected and emerging infectious diseases. We encourage potential future partners to reach out to discuss the co-development of R&D vaccine projects in basic & translational research, clinical trials, technology transfers, and programs related to disease surveillance and training programs.”

Anh Wartel, Deputy Director General,  
Head of IVI Europe Regional Office

## The International Vaccine Institute (IVI) is represented in Austria

**IVI is a nonprofit international organization established in 1997 as an initiative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Its mission is to discover, develop and deliver safe, effective and affordable vaccines for global public health. Its goal is to free developing countries from infectious diseases such as cholera, typhoid and dengue fever.**

IVI has 39 member countries, is headquartered in Seoul and operates a European Regional Office in Stockholm. The **IVI Austria Country Office** facilitates networking with Austrian government officials and the life sciences ecosystem including health industry, biotech companies, academia, and research institutes.

[www.ivi.int/where-we-work/regional-and-country-offices/austria-country-office/](http://www.ivi.int/where-we-work/regional-and-country-offices/austria-country-office/)

## Synthetic biology in Vienna

**Ribbon Biolabs has opened the doors of its new headquarters in Austria. This marks a big milestone and opportunity to increase capacity for the automated assembly of sequence-agnostic, long DNA, which will empower innovation in synthetic biology. With its new facilities in Vienna and offices in the US, Ribbon Biolabs is ready to expand its business globally.**

Synthetic biology is one of the most rapidly growing life science markets. The major bottleneck in its advance is the limited availability of synthetic DNA. Ribbon Biolabs' enzyme-based InfiniSynth® platform for automated high-throughput production of long, complex DNA will help to overcome this challenge. The company is driving DNA synthesis beyond the limits of current technologies and allows the manufacturing of DNA molecules without size or sequence limitations, at a high level of accuracy and at unprecedented speed.



## Why Vienna?

“Opening our new headquarters in Vienna isn't just a strategic choice; it's a commitment to excellence at the crossroads of science and culture. With its rich history

of innovation, art, and science, Vienna inspires us to create cutting-edge synthetic biology products for the biopharma market. It also empowers us to efficiently serve the biopharma market in Europe, where other providers are delayed with long shipping times. While we continue to expand our footprint to serve the global synthetic biology community, we are extremely proud to call Vienna home.”

Jodi Barrientos, Chief Business Officer,  
Ribbon Biolabs

# Proxygen: Reshaping the boundaries of drug discovery in Vienna

**Proxygen ranks among the Fierce Biotech's "Fierce 15 in 2023" – as one of the most promising and innovative biotech companies worldwide. LISAvienna talked to CEO Bernd Boidol, and is pleased to share insights into the reasons why.**

## **What is your company working on?**

Proxygen is a leader in the discovery and development of molecular glue degraders. Due to the ability of molecular glue degraders to modulate protein classes unamenable to traditional drug discovery approaches, these molecules hold the promise of unlocking a large proportion of the undruggable target space, thereby creating new opportunities for patients with difficult-to-treat diseases.

## **To get to know you a little bit better, what do you value most about your work?**

Biotech is an ecosystem that does not reward "second best". There is simply no market for a medicine that succumbs to rival drugs. Awards and oversubscribed funding rounds are a great validation of a company's path, but it quickly boils down to the question of whether you can continuously exceed expectations over a long period of time. It is a privilege for me to work in such an environment with people who are fully committed to competing with the best in the field.



Bernd Boidol / CEO

## **Why did you choose Vienna for setting up Proxygen?**

There is so much talent, ideas, and potential for biotech in this city. It would have been a missed opportunity if we had moved to the US at such an early stage. After all, we are a spin-off of CeMM – the Vienna-based Center for Molecular Medicine of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Proxygen's scientific founders have close ties to the city and Vienna has a generous funding landscape for young, ambitious companies. We never regretted our decision to launch Proxygen in Vienna.

## **What are your company's most important achievements to date?**

We have seen Proxygen going through an outstandingly successful starting phase. Partnerships with BI, Merck KGaA, and MSD, three high-profile pharma companies who fully share our excitement around glue degraders, mark one of our major achievements to date and are a tremendous validation of our work so far. Our biggest asset, however, is our team – whose dedication, diversity, drive, and ambition make it fun to go the extra mile together every single day and follow the long-term goals that we want to achieve.

## **What were LISAvienna's contributions to these achievements?**

Without LISAvienna it would have taken us much longer to get to where we are today. The lab space at the Vienna Business Agency's Startup Labs, reduced rates for partnering conferences, access to the local biotech network, and valuable advice along our development path: these were just a few of the many things that enabled us to fully focus on building our company. Public funding programs such as those at aws and FFG facilitated developing a competitive business model for our innovations.

## **Where are we likely to meet you in the next few months?**

The next few months will be quite busy with meetings and conferences in Europe and the US.

[www.proxygen.com](http://www.proxygen.com)